

PART II

ADAMS COUNTY POPULATION

Growth

Settlers did not begin moving into Adams County until the latter part of the 1800's because of the boundary dispute with Great Britain, Indian hostility, and lack of transportation. With the boundary settled in 1848 and the Indians defeated by the late 1860's, Adams County was open to agricultural development. Cattle raising and railroad construction brought the population to 2,098 in 1890, the first census year following creation of the county. An influx of homesteaders and land speculators and the development of wheat farming continued the upward population trend.

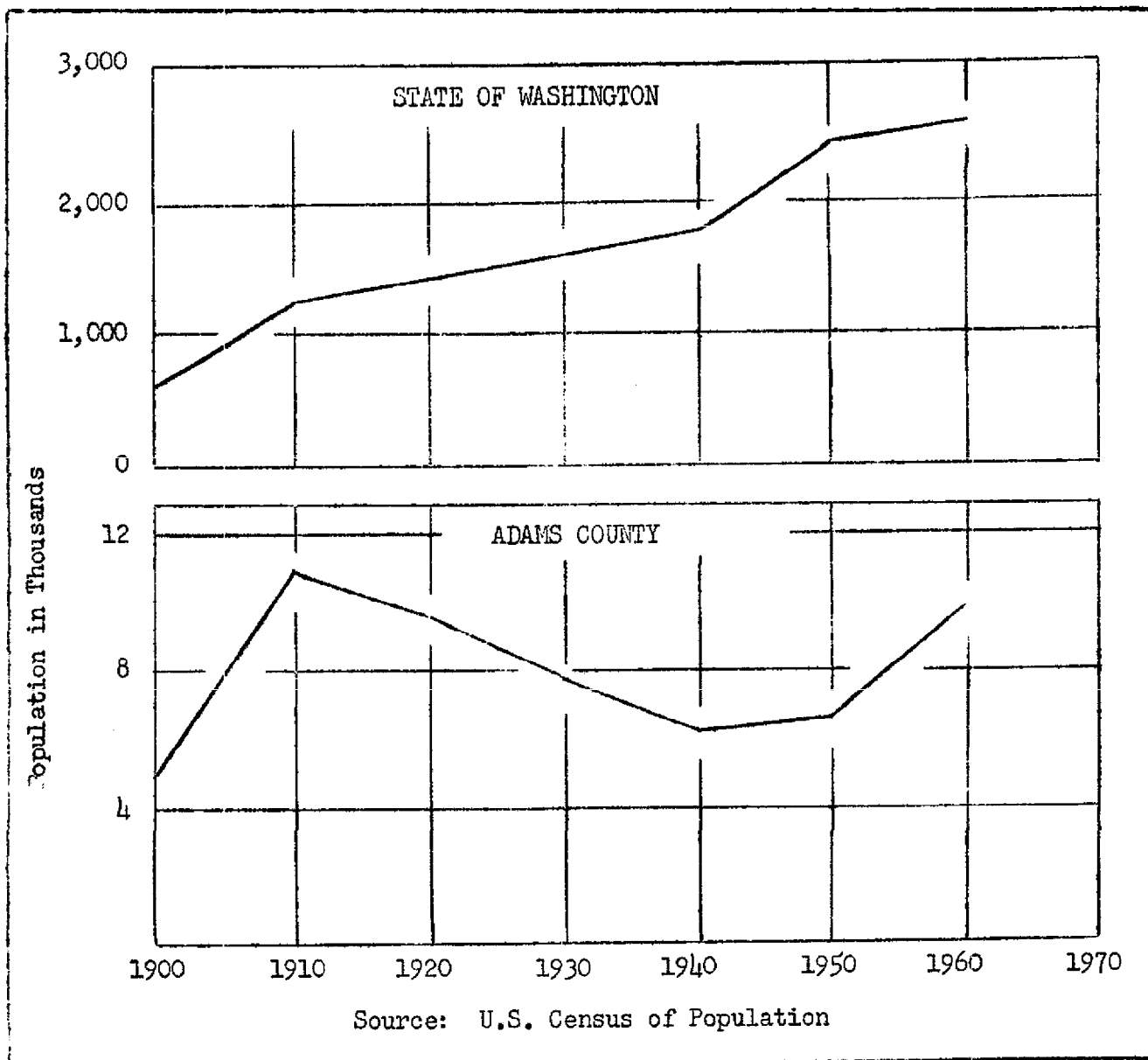


Figure 1. Population Trends, 1900 - 1960.

By 1900 there were 4,840 people in the county and by 1910 there were 10,920. Low wheat prices, drought, and depression then reversed the trend and population decreased steadily during the next 30 years to 6,209 in 1940. The downward plunge then leveled off and the 1950 census showed 6,584 inhabitants. Irrigation development during the 1950's brought new farmers and new prosperity to the county and by 1960 the population reached 9,929.

Distribution, Rural and Urban Population

According to Census definition, urban population consists of people living in incorporated or unincorporated towns or cities with at least 2,500 inhabitants. All Adams County's urban population (27 percent of the total) lives in Othello, the only center having over 2,500 people. Othello's development is recent and resulted from location within the irrigation project. From 526 in 1950 Othello's population climbed to 2,669 in the following decade.

Table 3. Population of Adams County, 1880-1960

Year	Population	Rural ^{1/}	Urban
1880	2/	--	--
1890	2,098	2,098	0
1900	4,840	4,840	0
1910	10,920	10,920	0
1920	9,623	9,623	0
1930	7,719	7,719	0
1940	6,209	6,209	0
1950	6,584	6,584	0
1960	9,929	7,260	2,669

^{1/} Those living in the country or in towns of less than 2,500.

^{2/} Organized from part of Whitman County in 1883.

Source: U.S. Census of Population

Other incorporated places have not shown the impressive growth experienced by Othello. Ritzville, the second largest town, had about 300 more people in 1960 than the 1,859 present in 1910. Other incorporated places have remained fairly stable in population since 1910. These are Hatton, Lind, and Washtucna.

Table 4. Population of Incorporated Places, Adams County, 1910-1960

Incorporated City or Town	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960
Hatton	161	87	65	43	42	65
Lind	831	724	730	679	796	697
Othello	---	649	397	332	526	2,669
Ritzville	1,859	1,900	1,777	1,748	2,145	2,173
Washtucna	300	359	261	285	316	331
Cunningham	---	89	37	---	---	---

Source: U.S. Census of Population

The main population concentration is in and around Othello in the southwestern end of the county. A secondary concentration is at Ritzville, focal point and trade center for wheat growers located in the north central part of the county. The rest of the county's people are spread out fairly evenly and sparsely.

Rural nonfarm population--those people living in the country or in small towns but not directly engaged in farming--was 3,661 in 1930 and 3,391 in 1940. The number increased slightly to 4,257 in 1950 and 4,455 in 1960. Rural-farm inhabitants decreased during the depression and war years, from 4,058 in 1930, to 2,818 in 1940, to 2,327 in 1950. Farm people began coming into the county again following irrigation development in the 1950's and numbered 2,805 in 1960.

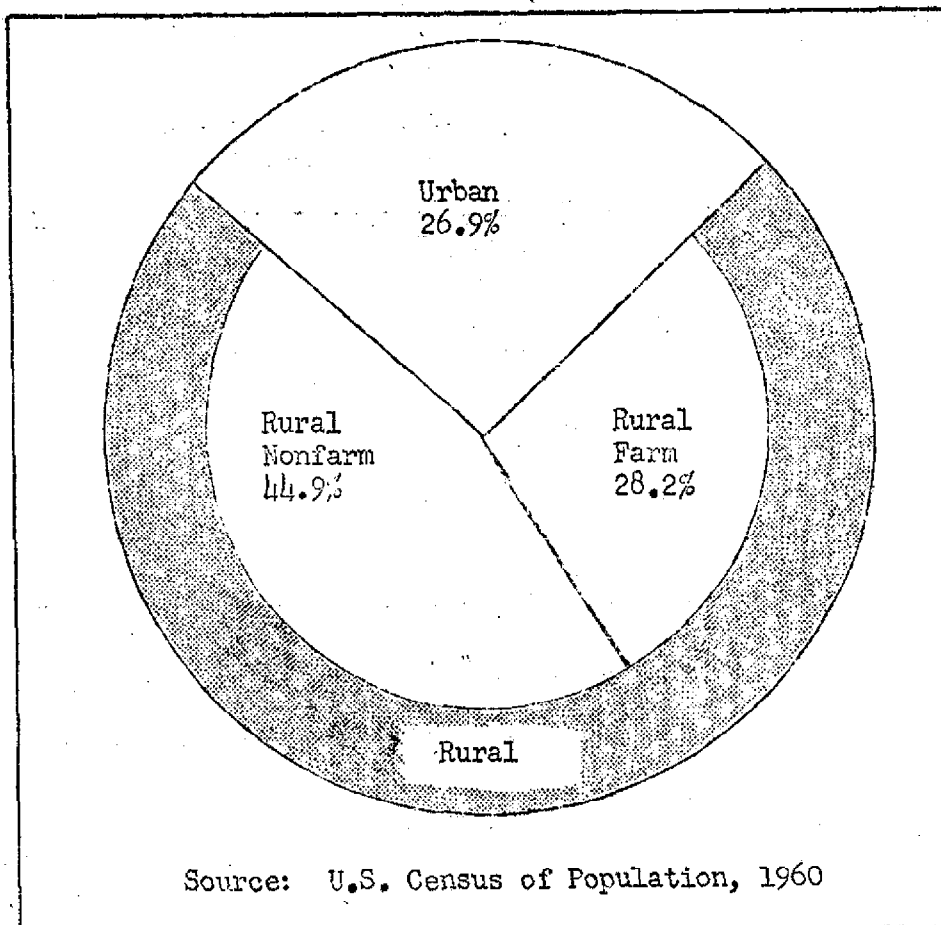


Figure 2. Urban and Rural Population, Adams County, 1960

Population Characteristics

Agriculture and allied trading activities have attracted settlers of varied origins. Of the 9,929 inhabitants in 1960, those from first or second generation foreign stock numbered 2,229. Only 415 were actually foreign born, indicating immigration has slowed in recent years. The most common countries of origin for those of foreign stock were Russia (889), Germany (399), Canada (208), United Kingdom (101), Mexico (88), Sweden (83), Asia (82), and Norway (75). A large majority of the county's people are of the white race--99 percent in 1960. Non-whites include Negroes, Indians, Japanese, and Chinese.

Table 5. Employment of the Population,
Adams County, 1960

Types of Employment	Total Workers
<u>Total employed workers</u>	3,665
Agriculture	1,273
Forestry and fisheries.	4
Mining.	0
Construction.	372
Manufacturing	104
Transportation, Communications and other Public Utilities. .	327
Retail and wholesale trade. . .	637
Miscellaneous services.	739
Public administration (govern- ment employment).	152
Other employment.	57

Source: U.S. Census of Population

Of the county's 3,665 employed workers in 1960, 1,273 (35 percent) were in agriculture. Miscellaneous services such as finance, insurance, real estate, education, medical facilities, and repair services employed 739. Retail and wholesale trade claimed 637. Another 372 worked in construction and 327 in transportation, communications, and other public utilities. Manufacturing employed 104 and 152 worked in public administration.

The age structure reflects the recent expansion, in that young age classes account for a larger proportion of the inhabitants than in the state as a whole. Young people under 18 years of age made up 41 percent of the county's population in 1960, as compared to 36 percent for the state. Median age that year was 27 for the county and 30 for the state. People 65 years old and over accounted for only 7 percent of the county's inhabitants.

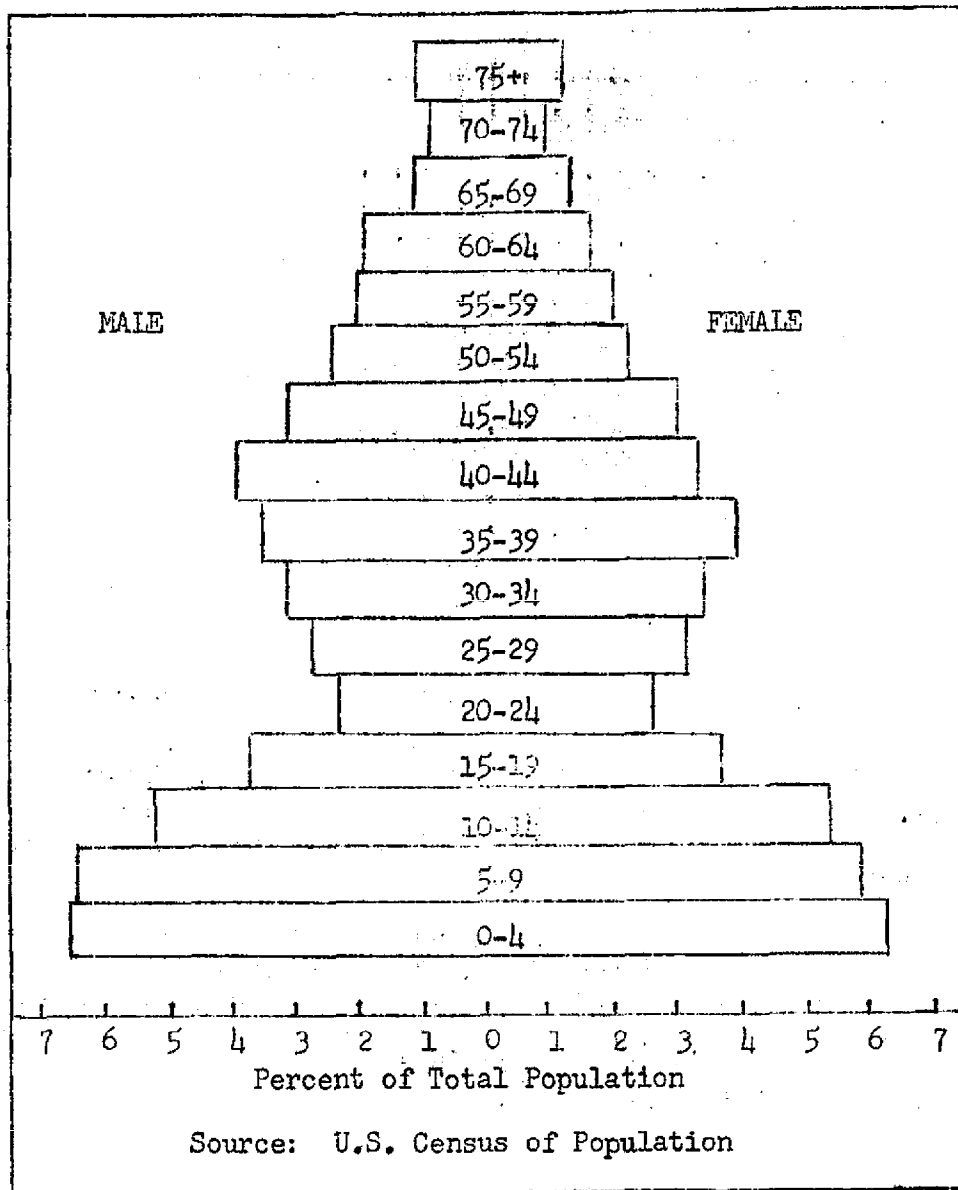


Figure 3. Age Distribution of Population,
Adams County, 1960.